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**Transmitted via Email**

February 22, 2005

MINNESOTA BULLETIN NO. 300-05-29

SUBJECT: LTP – EQIP – PRODUCER ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATIONS

Purpose. To provide instructions on making eligibility determinations and approving applications.

Expiration Date. September 30, 2005

National Bulletin 390-5-5 (attached) provides instructions on an interim process offices will use to determine applicant eligibility in regards to highly erodible land conservation (HELC), wetland conservation (WC), and adjusted gross income (AGI). Key points of this bulletin:

- NRCS employees may access Farm Services Agency (FSA) records to confirm HELC/WC and AGI eligibility and manually document the results in Protracts
- In the near future ProTracts will import eligibility data for each applicant and automatically set the flags in ProTracts to indicate compliance status.
- The Designated Conservationist will print the eligibility data for 2005, place this in the contract file, and set the HELC/WC and AGI flags in ProTracts to document the status.
- Applicants without determinations should be referred to FSA for an AD-1026 and/or CCC526.
- FSA Handbook 3-PL is available as an on-line reference, although most offices should not need it.
- Applicants must be in SCIMS and have current “Member Information” for entities or joint operations.
- FSA has agreed to provide at the county office level a copy of documents supporting entity or joint operation signature authority for EQIP.

Also attached is a supplemental EQIP Eligibility Checklist that staff may use to insure that the participant is eligible for EQIP.

Field Office Actions:

1. Review National Bulletin 390-5-5
2. Follow the instructions of the attached “Farm Service Agency Subsidiary Application/Eligibility Website” to access the website, find the person, and review their eligibility.
3. Print the eligibility data, place in the applicant’s file and manually set the HELC/WC and AGI status flags in Protracts. The attached instructions taken from California say that a certified AD-1026 determination is sufficient for eligibility. However, we suggest staff also check the Conservation Compliance portion of the screen. If a person is thought to be in violation, do not rely on the web data alone. Any time NRCS believes the applicant is in violation of HELC or WC, they should check with their local FSA office to determine the correct status of the applicant.
4. If all basic eligibility factors are met (ag producer, land eligibility, control of land, HELC/WC, AGI, payment limitation), applications should be changed from ‘Pending’ to ‘Eligible’ in ProTracts.

5. Score and rank all applications on hand as of COB January 28, 2005 and 'Approve Applications' in ProTracts within your county allocation.
  - *DO NOT 'Sign Contracts' to obligate funds at this time.* We are anticipating the final migration/reconciliation steps will be completed at the national level within the next two weeks. Contract obligation will be authorized at that time.

Questions should be directed to your ASTC(FO) or from the Area to Tim Koehler, Assistant State Conservationist.

WILLIAM HUNT  
State Conservationist

Attachments: National Bulletin 390-5-5  
Farm Service Agency Subsidiary Application/Eligibility Website (attached to Natl. Bulletin)  
EQIP Eligibility Checklist

DIST: ASTC  
FO  
ARC  
EQIP State Office Team